

inclusion specialist whose mission is to ensure that her organization is as inclusive and compassionate as possible. She embodies the quality that unites all of these women, a shared desire to build a better future for all.

Lori, Estela, Kristen, Remy, Valerie, Vivian, Donna, Caitlin, Erica, and Namene, you enrich our community beyond measure. Never doubt your impact because we all feel it every single day.

INTRODUCING LEGISLATION TO REDUCE CRIME AND ENHANCE PUBLIC SAFETY

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Tennessee (Mr. KUSTOFF) for 5 minutes.

Mr. KUSTOFF. Madam Speaker, I rise today to talk about important legislation I am introducing today. It is called the Cell Phone Jamming Reform Act. Senator TOM COTTON is introducing the companion bill in the Senate.

All around the Nation, one of the most important issues that I hear about is the rapid rise in crime, especially violent crime.

According to the Major Cities Chiefs Association Crime Report for 2022 for urban areas, homicide is up 13 percent, rape is up 23 percent, aggravated assault is up 33 percent—all since 2020.

Every one of us knows that this is unacceptable and everyone should feel safe being in their community. In the House Republicans' Commitment to America, we promised that the new Republican majority will work toward creating a Nation that is safe. A key pillar of that promise is alleviating this current crime crisis.

The Cell Phone Jamming Reform Act is a crucial first step in our effort to reduce crime and enhance public safety. This legislation will prevent criminals from conducting criminal operations from behind bars by allowing State and Federal prison officials to use cell phone jamming systems.

The technology will protect inmates, it will protect guards, and it will protect the public at large.

State attorneys general from across the country have determined that cell phones from within prisons, these contraband cell phones, are among the most serious threat to public safety facing prison administrators today.

Now, as cell phone technology has evolved, and it continues to evolve, mobile phones are easier to conceal than ever. They provide countless ways for criminals to communicate with the outside world.

Inmates use contraband cell phones to organize murders, riots, drug operations, fraud, extortion, and other crimes. I want to give you just a few examples.

In Tennessee, an inmate used a contraband cell phone to orchestrate drug conspiracy deals by shipping a package full of methamphetamine to his girlfriend from within the prison. In

South Carolina, there have been four major drug trafficking cases where the operation was run by contraband cell phones from behind prison walls. In 2018, gang-affiliated inmates in a maximum security prison used cell phones to organize and coordinate a brutal attack that killed 7 inmates and injured 20.

All Americans have the right to feel safe in their communities, to walk their kids around the block without the fear of assault, to park their car without the fear it will be broken into, or maybe taken completely.

One of the most fundamental duties of government is to ensure that its citizens have the right and the ability to live, to work, and to raise a family without the fear of being a victim of crime.

The Cell Phone Jamming Reform Act is a key step toward reducing crime, enhancing public safety, and, ultimately, to fulfilling our goal to create a Nation that is safe.

I urge my colleagues to support this commonsense legislation.

TRANS DAY OF VISIBILITY

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from Massachusetts (Ms. CLARK) for 5 minutes.

Ms. CLARK of Massachusetts. Madam Speaker, ahead of Trans Day of Visibility, I rise in honor of a community that is being forced to fight for its very existence. I rise in honor of trans voices that deserve to be heard, not silenced and not criminalized. I rise in honor of trans joy that deserves to be celebrated, not eradicated. I rise with unconditional love for my trans daughter, Riley. I rise in solidarity with every trans American seeking nothing less than their inalienable right to the pursuit of happiness.

To stand in the way of that right is to stand against our most basic American values, but that is exactly what MAGA extremists are doing across this country—on school boards, in State capitals, and here in the Halls of Congress.

Elected officials are using their power to undermine the freedoms and human dignity of trans Americans, and they are waging an especially vicious crusade on our kids.

These attacks make me all the more grateful for the unconditional love that Mimi and Joe Lemay of Massachusetts have for their son, Jacob. Mimi and Joe have faced vitriol and cruelty from rightwing extremists, all because they heard, accepted, and embraced Jacob when he told them he is a boy.

A few years ago, Mimi shared a letter she wrote to her son, and I would like to offer a few of her moving words: "You have at the age of 9 years accomplished what many adults couldn't in a lifetime. In your courageous visibility, you have changed the course of your own history. You have turned strangers into allies and allies into advocates.

Layered in my pride is my concern for you. I know your strength, but I also know how determined the forces are that have pitted themselves against you. The politicians and preachers who would rather see you languish in a dark closet than watch you engage the world as you do, cultivating joy and love wherever you go."

Madam Speaker, Jacob's courage demonstrates a profound strength. Let's show that strength the respect it demands. Let's reject the forces of opposition and bigotry. Let's celebrate the bravery and beauty of our trans community. Let's follow Jacob's example and cultivate joy and love wherever we go.

HONORING LAUREN ZIEGLER

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Texas (Mr. BABIN) for 5 minutes.

Mr. BABIN. Madam Speaker, I am here today to share a bittersweet message. Over 6 years ago, I interviewed Ms. Lauren Ziegler for the job of legislative assistant. I saw something rare and special in Lauren, and she proved it from her very first day on the job.

As my colleagues will attest, Capitol Hill is overflowing with many talented people, but few possess the ability to do it all and to do it well and to do it with a smile, and that sums up Lauren Ziegler.

Lauren rose from a junior L.A. position to become our legislative director and our deputy chief of staff. However, for me, her most significant role has been as one of my most trusted advisers. In truth, I can think of no one who has better advised me over the years.

From day one, Lauren understood that our number one mission was to serve the needs and the interests of the good people of the Texas 36th Congressional District. I have received countless compliments from folks in Texas and here in Washington regarding the quality of her work. Frankly, I am shocked that no other office stole Lauren away from us. I am sure many have tried.

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Lauren's loyalty was true to the Babin team. She has served us and Texas' 36th District with all of her heart. For that, we are very grateful.

Lauren's heart belongs to the Sunshine State. She will be returning home to Florida soon to continue serving our Nation in a different capacity at NASA's Kennedy Space Center.

I have no doubt that, at NASA, Lauren Ziegler's rare and special qualities will contribute to their abilities to break barriers, explore the unknown, and send mankind back to the Moon and to places that we have never been before. I look forward to watching her future unfold down in Florida.

I hope that Lauren will look back on her time here in Washington with as much fondness for us as we have for her.

Lauren, you will always be part of Team Babin and an honorary member of the Babin family. I am very proud of you, and I am very proud to have been part of your history. Thank you for a job well done.

God bless.

THIRTEEN SCHOOL SHOOTINGS IN FIRST 3 MONTHS OF 2023

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from Massachusetts (Mrs. TRAHAN) for 5 minutes.

Mrs. TRAHAN. Madam Speaker, I rise today with a heavy heart and a level of anger shared by millions of Americans, millions of parents.

On Monday, three 9-year-old children and three adults were gunned down at the Covenant School in Nashville, Tennessee. The shooter, armed with not one but two assault weapons, broke into the school and stole the lives of innocent people simply going about their day.

For my colleagues across the aisle not keeping track, the massacre was the 130th mass shooting of the year. It was the 13th school shooting of 2023, and that is only if you count the time someone was injured or killed when a gun went off on school grounds.

Thirteen times over the past 3 months, parents have dropped their children at the bus stop or at school. They told them they loved them, to have a great day, and that they would see them when they got home. Then, they got the call that every parent fears, the one that wakes us up in the middle of the night.

Thirteen times this year, parents in a city or town hung up that phone or turned off their TV and raced to their children's school.

Thirteen times parents waited behind police tape, hoping to hear something about their son or daughter.

Madam Speaker, how many more times are we going to let this happen?

How many more times can my colleagues across the aisle tweet their thoughts and prayers but say that their hands are tied on gun safety legislation?

How many more Christmas cards of Members of Congress holding AR-15s do we need to see while students in their classrooms practice active shooter drills?

School shooting after school shooting, Congress has had the opportunity to act.

We have the legislation to ban assault weapons, like the rifles used in Nashville on Monday.

We have legislation to require background checks on every gun purchase so firearms aren't falling into the hands of people who shouldn't have them.

We have legislation to prevent someone convicted of a hate crime from being able to purchase a gun.

What this Chamber doesn't have enough of is willpower. It doesn't have

enough courage to act. This inaction is shameful, and as a parent, it is disgusting.

Apparently, the Republican leadership in the House thinks that the biggest issue facing our children today is the books in their library because while we have yet to take up a bill to stop school shootings, the number one killer of our children in America, this Chamber passed a bill last week to politicize our kids' education—a bill, by the way, that they didn't even have unanimous Republican support for.

I mean, what are we doing here?

I have to go home tomorrow and look my 8-year-old daughter in her eyes, 1 week before she turns 9, and tell her that three more kids were shot and killed in their classroom, but mama can't get half of her colleagues in the Congress to care enough to do anything about it.

How can anyone in this Chamber be okay with telling their kids or their grandkids that?

How can you see the kids who are taking pictures right outside on the Capitol steps and do nothing to prevent their school from being next?

How can we call ourselves the greatest country in the world when its elected leaders sit on their hands while children are murdered hiding beneath their desks?

We can't, and to those of you deflecting or giving up, you should be ashamed.

Madam Speaker, I implore you to go back to your party's leadership, go back to Speaker MCCARTHY and tell him that we need to end the gun violence epidemic that is plaguing our children. Do it before it is too late for another school, for another family.

GRIEVING FOR TENNESSEE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Tennessee (Mr. GREEN) for 5 minutes.

Mr. GREEN of Tennessee. Madam Speaker, I come to the House floor today with a heavy and grieving heart for my home State of Tennessee. No one should ever have to endure what the Covenant School community has gone through.

I know that my colleagues here today understand how difficult the situation is, and your prayers for our community are deeply appreciated as we mourn this senseless loss of life.

I want to take a moment to remember the victims of this horrible attack: three schoolchildren, William Kinney, Evelyn Dieckhaus, Hallie Scruggs, all age 9; and three staff members, Cynthia Peak, a substitute teacher, Mike Hill, a custodian, and Covenant School Headmaster Katherine Koonce.

All the lives were precious.

Mike Hill, for example, worked for the Covenant School for 15 years. He not only served the school and the church, but he learned every student's name. He was the father of seven children.

Cynthia Peak was a beloved wife and mother.

Dr. Katherine Koonce was a dedicated and passionate educator, who always put children first.

Words cannot describe how hard it is to lose children, three precious 9-year-old children, one of whom was the daughter of the lead pastor of the Covenant Presbyterian Church. These children never had a chance to grow up, and my heart is completely broken for these families. I cannot imagine.

Nothing can be said to dull the pain of this tragedy. Tennesseans, and Americans worldwide, are praying and grieving with this Covenant community.

Madam Speaker, I also commend all the first responders that were on the scene and the medical professionals that treated victims at Vanderbilt Medical Center.

I especially commend the five Metro Nashville Police officers who arrived at the school first. These men ran toward the sound of the gunfire instead of away from it. Their bravery absolutely saved lives.

The two officers that shot and killed, with a gun, the shooter, Officers Rex Engelbert and Michael Collazo, are heroes. They did not hesitate, and because of their quick response, lives were saved.

Though unspeakable grief holds Nashville in its grasp, I honor the incredible heroism of Metro Nashville's first responders. Instinct and courage took over in the face of evil and fear. I join Tennesseans in expressing my sincere gratitude for their quick response.

The outpouring of love means the world to the Covenant community and all Tennesseans.

WE ARE FAILING OUR YOUTH, AND THEY KNOW IT

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from Pennsylvania (Ms. SCANLON) for 5 minutes.

Ms. SCANLON. Madam Speaker, we are failing our youth, and they know it.

I rise today to share the voices of our children, the voices of those who attend schools where, once again this week, young lives were lost to gun violence that Congress refuses to prevent.

My office runs a Congressional Youth Cabinet, a nonpartisan program that gives high school students the opportunity to learn about our government and share their views. We meet every couple of months during the school year, and they select topics for discussion at each meeting.

Last weekend, the topic was gun violence. The next day, six people were slaughtered in yet another school shooting. Three of them were only 9 years old.

As I struggled to find words to convey, once again, the urgency that Congress act, I turned to the students in my youth cabinet. I asked them what